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marlbeth dwyer • news editor

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THE PICTURE BRIGHTENS
FOR TELEVISION AT UM

MISSOULA--

A large federal grant, supplemented with private funding, is financing major improvements for the TV portion of the University of Montana's Department of Radio-TV. The department is in the process of purchasing entirely new studio equipment that will give the program color television capability, while replacing the 20-year-old black-and-white equipment now in use.

The new facilities carry a \$115,000 price tag, 75 percent of which will be paid by a grant from the National Telecommunications Information Administration/Public Telecommunications Facilities Program, part of the U.S. Department of Commerce. Professor Greg MacDonald, who last year was acting chairman of radio-TV, filed the successful grant application.

The remaining 25 percent will be paid with a contribution from the UM Foundation and from equipment and department budgets.

Major items of equipment to be purchased include two combination studio/portable, color, broadcast quality cameras; a switcher, the device that processes all pictures in the studio and produces special effects like dissolves and fade-outs; a computer assisted editing console, new monitors; a character generator for subtitles and graphics and a film chain camera, permitting broadcast of movies and slides.

"It's not Wide World of Sports," said MacDonald, "but it will be a very flexible and complete color studio facility."

-over-

PICTURE BRIGHTENS--add one

"This is a major step for us," he added. "The new equipment will let students produce programs that are airable."

UM's radio-TV program has always attempted to simulate actual broadcast situations, but MacDonald feels that the quality of student experience will be enhanced "by the notion that productions may actually go on the air."

MacDonald hopes that the new equipment can be delivered in time to be installed between fall and winter quarters. At the latest UM should have an up-to-date television studio operating by spring.

MacDonald pointed out, however, that television is a very equipment-intensive business, and the equipment is expensive. Until now the University of Montana, like many other universities with television programs, has not been able to keep up with advances in the industry.

"This gets us to the point where we can continue for some time," said MacDonald, "but we can't look at this as an end point or we're going to be behind in a few years."

UM President Richard Bowers agrees. Calling the new equipment "a welcome and invaluable addition to the University's radio-TV program," Bowers cautioned "hardware alone won't sustain a first-rate program. The logical next step, if we are to maintain and build on UM's fine reputation in radio-TV, is the new combined fine arts/radio-TV building that we are seeking from the legislature."

Besides enhancing the radio-TV program for students, the improved facility should make a contribution to the community. The new facility will give the University the ability to document and bring to the public activities in the arts, humanities and sciences.

MacDonald thinks this will lead to better public understanding of and appreciation for the University activities that few people would otherwise know about.

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